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### **Senate Democrats Reject Bill to Help Working Families Cover Growing Child Care Costs**

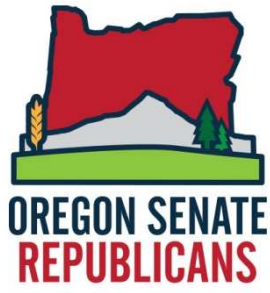
Salem, OR - Today, Senate Democrats rejected a proposal to expand the Working Family Child Care Tax Credit to assist Oregon families in covering rising childcare costs. SB 655 would have doubled the percentage of childcare expenses a family can recoup. Democrat Ways and Means Co-Chairs have proposed cutting the Working Family Child Care Tax Credit in their budget framework this session.

"Oregon ranks last in the nation for affordable child care, and we had an opportunity to do something about that today," said Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River), who carried the motion on the floor. "While household income is declining, the cost of child care keeps rising for Oregon families. We need to examine ways we can relieve the burden of high child care costs on Oregonians so working families don't have to just scrape by."

Under the bill, lower-income families can claim up to 80% of their childcare expenses. The average annual cost of infant care in Oregon now exceeds \$13,600. For preschoolers, that cost exceeds \$10,300, more than the annual in-state tuition at the University of Oregon. The cost of child care for an infant is 19% of the median income for a married couple and 63% of a single mother's income in Oregon.

"Too many parents are forced to make the decision between costly child care so they can go to work and staying at home, relying on unemployment and other government services so they can take care of their children," said Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). "Expanding the Child Care Tax Credit will help working mothers and fathers provide for their children."

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